State of California
Business, Transportation & Housing Agency
Department of Transportation

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ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

07-LA-5, KP 47.9/50.9 (PM 29.79/31.63)
Action Item

CTC Meeting: October 3, 2002

Reference No.: 2.2c.(5)

Original Signed By:
ROBERT L. GARCIA
Chief Financial Officer
October 1, 2002

APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING TO CONSTRUCT A NEW INTERCHANGE IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, IN THE CITY OF BURBANK

RESOLUTION E-02-47

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The attached resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Negative Declaration has been completed:

- Route 5 in Los Angeles County – Construct a new interchange in the City of Burbank.

The project is fully funded in the 2002 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) with Regional Improvement Program (RIP) funds and Interregional Improvement Program (IIP) funds. The total cost of the project is $108 million with $12,494,000 coming from the IIP funds, and $19,251,000 coming from locally generated funds. Construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2006/07.

The Negative Declaration and supporting Initial Study has been transmitted to California Transportation Commission staff.

The Department of Transportation has approved the project for construction. This approval and the resulting filing of the Notice of Determination with the Office of Planning and Research will satisfy the environmental requirements for this stage of the project planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-02-47.

Attachment

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding
07-LA-5, KP 47.9/50.9 (PM 29.79/31.63)

Resolution E-02-47

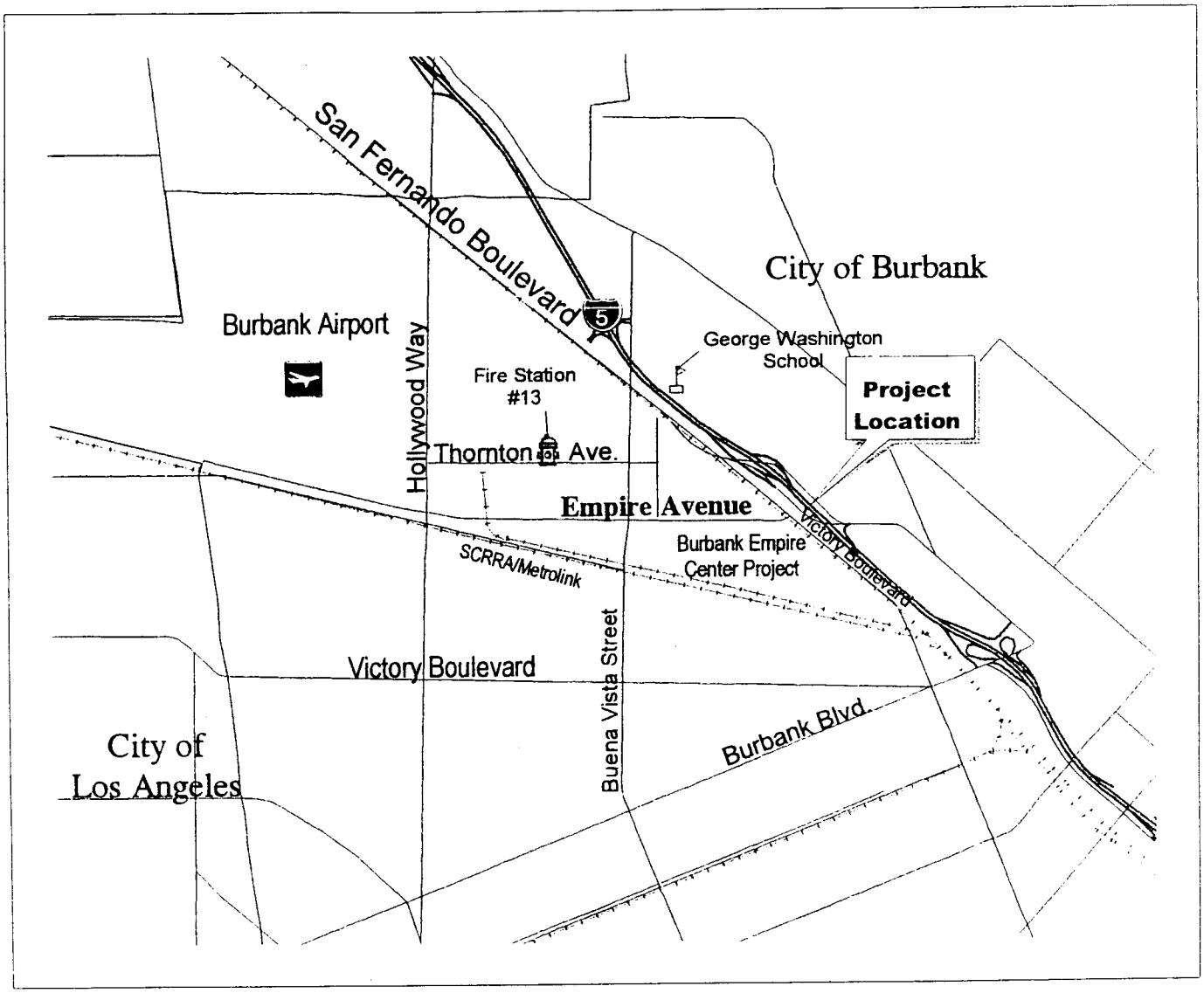
1.1 **WHEREAS,** the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed a Negative Declaration in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the CEQA Guidelines, and the California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations for the following project:

- Route 5 in Los Angeles County – Construct a new interchange in the City of Burbank.

1.2 **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Negative Declaration; and

1.3 **WHEREAS,** the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

2.1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby approve the above referenced project.



Project Location Map
I-5 Empire Interchange

Figure 2

SUMMARY

This Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) addresses the potential environmental impacts resulting from the construction of a new interchange at Empire Avenue and Interstate 5 (I-5) in the City of Burbank, Los Angeles County. (figure 1).

The analyses found in this IS/EA show that the proposed project will not significantly affect the quality of the environment. This study has resulted in a determination that a Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact (ND/FONSI) is the appropriate finding for the proposed project. This IS/EA has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROJECT

1.1 Introduction

This proposed project consists of constructing a new interchange on Interstate 5 (I-5) at Empire Avenue in Los Angeles County. The I-5 is a major north/south freeway corridor extending from San Diego, California at the Mexican border to Blaine, Washington at the Canadian Border. The freeway at the proposed project location consists of four (4), 3.6m (12 ft) lanes with a 3.05m (10 ft) wide shoulder in each direction separated by a concrete median barrier. The proposed interchange will be located between the Burbank Boulevard and Buena Vista Street interchanges on I-5.

Currently on I-5, there is heavy congestion in the dominant direction of flow during peak periods. These traffic conditions are forecasted to further deteriorate in future years due to a projected increase in traffic demand. To improve mobility and achieve acceptable levels of traffic operation, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the City of Burbank, initiated studies to evaluate the feasibility of constructing a new I-5 interchange at Empire Avenue.

1.2 Changes Since Circulation of Draft Document

Public and Agency comments received during the circulation of the Draft IS/EA, the public hearing process, and subsequent agency consultations have resulted in project modifications which have been incorporated in this final document. A vertical line in the left margin or underlined text indicates changes made since Draft IS/EA circulation.

1.3 Background

In 1991, the need for improved access and egress to the I-5 freeway at Empire Avenue was first identified by the City of Burbank during the development of the Golden State Framework Plan and Environmental Impact Report, conducted for an area of about 485 hectares (1.200 acres) in the city's northwest corner. Subsequently, the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority identified the need for improved access to I-5 at Empire Avenue through the EIR/EIS for a

proposed new airport passenger terminal. This proposed project is included in the City of Burbank's Capital Improvement Program and Draft Transportation Element Update.

This project was initiated by the City of Burbank to improve traffic access and circulation in the project area and to facilitate future traffic increases associated with the planned redevelopment of the former Lockheed B-1 Sites (the redevelopment known as the "Burbank Empire Center Project" is currently under construction, see figure 2). The Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport, a regional air traffic hub, demands a direct and convenient connection to the regional surface transportation network to improve economic growth of the city and the region led by the Media and Entertainment Industry. In addition, the I-5 Freeway and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA)/Metrolink tracks currently bisect the City of Burbank, limiting the access between the west, where the airport and the proposed redevelopment are located and to the east, where the city central business district is located.

This project is supported by the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport, since the project would provide improved access to their facility. The developers at the former Lockheed site support this project as a direct beneficiary of the project. The Burbank residential communities in the area will benefit from the project because of the traffic circulation improvement in the local street network, which would significantly reduce out-of-direction travels and thus reducing the negative impacts related to such travels in community disruption, air quality and noise.

Related to this project is a proposal to construct High Occupancy Lanes (HOV) on I-5 between State Route 134 (SR 134) and State Route 118 (SR 118). This HOV project proposes the addition of two HOV lanes, one in each direction, within the median of I-5. To accommodate the addition of HOV lanes in the median, the median would be reconstructed and restriped. This proposed I-5 HOV project is identified in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 1998/99-2004/05 Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP), and the 2001 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The project is consistent with the goals and objectives contained in the 1993 Congestion Management Program (CMP) and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Los Angeles County. Construction is currently proposed to begin in the 2003-04 fiscal year.

This Empire Avenue Interchange project has been developed in accordance with Federal, State and regional project development policies and requirements. This project conforms to the 2020 Concept Facility for I-5 as defined in the Alternative Concept No. 2 in the Transportation Concept Report (TCR) of November 1998 (The Transportation Concept Report (TCR) is a Caltrans long-term planning document that evaluates the conditions of a given state transportation corridor, and establishes a twenty year planning concept).

1.4 Purpose and Need

The increasing use of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport and the current redevelopment of the former Lockheed B-1 Site (Burbank Empire Center Project) will impact the regional and local transportation network and require measures to improve access, efficiency and integration of multi-modal transportation network systems in the project area. Traffic forecasts and analysis indicated the effectiveness of the proposed project in improving area wide traffic operations mostly by reducing out-of-direction travels.

Building a Multi-modal Transportation System

The Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport serves a large regional population and its efficiency hinges on an integrated and efficient inter-modal transportation system, of which the proposed Empire Avenue Interchange is an identified link. The existing Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport access route to and from Glendale and Pasadena via freeway goes through Lincoln Street and Thornton Avenue, both two-lane minor streets that lack capacity and directness. This existing route cuts through a residential neighborhood, disrupting the community, interfering with emergency access for Fire Department Station 13 and potentially impacting the safety of the children playing at the Lundigan Park. This current access route crosses southbound San Fernando Boulevard at an obtuse angle, which is easy to miss and often causes severe traffic delays. In comparison, Empire Avenue is a four-lane roadway through an industrial/commercial area. The proposed interchange, can make the freeway access direct, more efficient and reduce impacts on local residential neighborhoods.

Supporting Regional Economic Growth

The Burbank Empire Center Project, planned for two million square feet of floor area, is envisioned as a large-scale economic development on a vacant site within a fully built-out urban area. The redevelopment intends to draw strength of the already established entertainment industry in the area to further enhance the region's position as the global leader in this fast growing and highly competitive economic sector. The success of the Burbank Empire Center Project will help bring continued economic growth to the Cities of Burbank and Glendale and provide greater regional benefit for Southern California and the State.

Direct access to and from I-5 is necessary to support the proposed redevelopment at the former Lockheed B-1 site. Empire Avenue currently terminates at Victory Place with no direct access to I-5 or the Burbank Central Business District (CBD). Without the proposed project, traffic from this proposed redevelopment must use West Burbank Boulevard to the south or Buena Vista Street to the north for access and circulation which will make the location less desirable and cause significant delays to existing trips by forcing utilization of the already congested local streets.

1.5 Traffic Studies

The traffic forecast model for the Project Study Report (PSR) prepared for this project was derived from the Burbank Golden State Framework Transportation Study, which was based on the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Transportation Model. The results of the model were reviewed and approved by Caltrans for use in the preparation of the PSR. Among the funded roadway improvements as mentioned in Traffic Operations Analysis (Barton-Aschman Associates Inc., March 3, 1999), widening of Hollywood Way between Winona Avenue and Empire Avenue has been implemented while rest remain on the city's Infrastructure Blueprint to be implemented by year 2015.

The traffic analysis (Referenced in appendix I) for the future baseline case, i.e. without project, revealed severe deficiency in the roadway network in serving the traffic demand. Several key intersections in the project area will operate at an unacceptable level of service, including Empire Avenue/Victory Place, Burbank Boulevard/I-5 southbound and Victory Place/Victory Boulevard/Burbank Boulevard. This area-wide congestion will impede access to and from I-5, causing traffic circulation breakdown on the local street network, disrupting the access to the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport and the viability of the regional economic growth potential as represented by the Burbank Empire Center Project.

The improvements proposed in this project will provide improved local traffic circulation and freeway access and therefore offer an opportunity to reduce out-of-direction travel and alleviate local traffic congestion. The Level of Service (LOS) calculations for the 2020 Build Alternatives indicate that the overall operations on the local street intersections will meaningfully improve from the baseline, while the overall operations on the freeway mainline and ramps in the area will also improve.

Table 1.4-1: Levels of Service Description

LOS (Level of Service)	*Volume to capacity ratio*	*Interpretation*
A	0.00 - 0.30	Free flow - excellent operation.
B	0.31 - 0.48	Stable flow - very good operation.
C	0.49 - 0.64	Stable flow - good operation.
D	0.65 - 0.80	Approaching unstable flow - fair operation.
E	0.81 - 0.90	Unstable flow - poor operation.
F-0	0.91-1.05	Traffic congested for 15 minutes to 1 hour.
F-1	1.06-1.20	Traffic congestion for 1 to 2 hours.
F-2	1.21-1.34	Traffic congestion for 2 to 3 hours.
F-3	1.35 or more	Traffic congestion for more than 3 hours.

Table 1.4-1 describes how "Level of Service" (LOS) is defined, LOS "A" representing free flowing traffic operations and LOS "F" representing the most congested traffic conditions.

Table 1.4-2: Interstate 5 Ramp Levels of Service Existing, 2020 Baseline and 2020 with Project						
Location	Level of Service					
	Existing		Year 2020 / No Project		Year 2020 / With Project	
Northbound I-5	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Olive off ramp	A	A	F	A	A	A
Olive on ramp	A	B	A	B	A	A
Burbank (EB) off ramp	A	A	A	B	A	A
Burbank (WB) off ramp	A	A	C	A	A	A
Burbank/Scott on ramp	A	A	A	C	A	A
San Fernando Rd./Scott/Empire off ramp	A	A	A	A	B	A
San Fernando Rd./Lincoln off ramp	A	A	D	A	D	A
San Fernando Rd./Scott/Empire on ramp	A	A	A	A	A	E
Buena Vista off ramp	A	A	D	C	A	A
Buena Vista on ramp	A	A	A	E	A	E
Southbound I-5						
Burbank off ramp	A	A	F	A	E	A
Buena Vista on ramp	A	A	A	E	A	A
San Fernando Rd./Scott/Empire off ramp	A	A	E	A	C	A
(old) San Fernando Rd./Lincoln on ramp	A	A	A	D	-	-
(New) Empire on ramp	-	-	-	-	A	C
Burbank off ramp	A	A	A	A	C	C
Burbank (WB) on ramp	A	A	A	A	A	C
Burbank (EB) on ramp	A	A	A	B	A	A
Source: Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., "Traffic Operations Analysis, Empire Avenue Interchange Improvements", March 3, 1999.						

Table 1.4-2 represents the Levels of Service for the on and off-ramps around the project area.

Table 1.4-3: Intersection Levels of Service (peak hours)						
Intersection	**Existing Traffic**		**2020 Baseline**		**2020 w/project**	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
San Fernando Rd. (N)/I-5 SB (on, off)	A	A	F	F	E	E
Buena Vista/I-5 NB (on, off)	D	E	F	F	F	F
San Fernando Blvd. (S)/Buena Vista	C	B	F	F	-	-
San Fernando Blvd. / Lincoln / Victory Pl.	C	E	C	C	A	A
Empire Ave. / Victory Pl.	A	A	F	F	-	-
Empire Ave/San Fernando Blvd. (new)	-	-	-	-	B	D
Empire Ave./I-5 (on, off)/SB San Fernando Blvd. (new)	-	-	-	-	D	D
Empire Ave. / San Fernando Blvd. / NB I-5 (off) (new)*	-	-	-	-	D	C
Burbank / I-5 SB	C	C	E	F	D	D
Burbank/Victory Pl./Victory Blvd.**	C	D	E	F	B	D

*The intersection of Empire Avenue / San Fernando Boulevard / NB I-5 off (new) was analyzed using the 1994 Highway Capacity Manual Operations Analysis methodology. The intersection delay was 33.6 seconds per vehicle in the AM peak hour and 17.4 seconds per vehicle in the PM peak hour

**The intersection of Burbank/Victory Pl./Victory Blvd. has since been reconfigured to remove Victory Blvd. by "T-ing" it into Burbank west of the intersection.

Table 1.4-3 represents the Levels of Service for the intersections around the project area. As noted in tables 1.4-2 and 1.4-3, the traffic data represented are based on traffic analysis prepared in 1999.

Table 1.4-4: Traffic Accident Data Summary Interstate 5 corridor between Post Mile 27.08 to 36.36							
Direction	Total Number of Accidents	Project Site Actual Rate (per million vehicle miles)			State Average Rate (per million vehicle miles)		
		Fatalities	F+I*	Total	Fatalities	F+I*	Total
Northbound	555	0.004	0.25	0.67	0.006	0.32	0.94
Southbound	633	0.007	0.27	0.76	0.006	0.32	0.94

Source: Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) records for the three-year period from 7/1/94 to 6/30/97

* Fatalities plus Injuries

Table 1.4-4 represents accident data summary for the one mile stretch along Interstate 5 crossing Empire Avenue. The rates under "per million vehicle miles" represent the number of recorded accidents per million vehicles on the one mile stretch of I-5 indicated by post mile 27.08 to 36.36.